

# In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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## Message from the Mayor

On December 8, I was pleased to receive the nomination and subsequently win election as the Second Vice President of the National League of Cities (NLC). This was an important election, not necessarily for me, but for the citizens of the District of Columbia. Our voice can now be heard louder and clearer across the country, especially in our quest for autonomy from the federal government and voting representation in the US Congress.

The National League of Cities is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. Its mission is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance. Working in partnership with 49 state municipal leagues, the NLC is a national resource to and an advocate for the more than 18,000 cities, villages, and towns it represents.

During the NLC's 79th Annual Congress of Cities in Salt Lake City, Utah, outgoing NLC President Mayor Karen Anderson of Minnetonka, Minnesota nominated me for this position. Councilman T.J. Patterson of Lubbock, Texas seconded the nomination. More than 4,000 city officials gathered for the Congress of Cities in Salt Lake City. Because of my election, I stand in line to become president of the NLC in December 2004.

During the Congress of Cities, I addressed numerous sub-groups within the NLC. Among them were the National Black Caucus' group of Local Elected Officials; the Asian Pacific American Municipal Officials; the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Business group; and the Hispanic Elected Local Officials.

The NLC has been a good friend of the District of Columbia. The organization continues to assist residents of the District in our efforts to gain budget autonomy and full voting rights in Congress. As NLC Second Vice President, I will use my relationships with President Bush and members of the US Congress to ensure that NLC members have a clear and strong voice in all matters impacting municipal governance. I will also continue to advance issues critical to the District from within the organization. It is a great honor to me personally and to the District of Columbia to have been elected to this post.

## District Faces First Snowstorm

This month, our city received its first snowstorm of the year, and I am happy to report that District employees were well prepared to meet the challenge. The DC Department of Public Works and the Department of Transportation deployed approximately 200 snow vehicles to salt and plow District streets. More than 400 drivers, technology experts, maintenance, fueling and supply personnel, and supervisory and support staff worked around the clock to make sure that our streets were safe.

At our new Snow Command Center (SCC) located in the Reeves Center, we worked with a new tracking program that allows us to chart and track the progress of our trucks, the working hours of our employees, and fuel and salt usage. The SCC is staffed by information technology specialists who are trained to track changing weather conditions from ground sensors on the streets. These sensors communicate ground and air temperatures, as well as street conditions.

For the first time, snow removal efforts included a blue salt deicer that is non-toxic and more visible than typical white salt. We will work with the manufacturer to develop an even more visible blue salt so that residents can see when streets have been serviced.

Remember when a snow emergency is declared in the District, as it was on December 5, Snow Emergency Routes must be clear of all parked vehicles. Snow Emergency Routes are clearly marked with red and white signs. Any vehicles parked on these routes are subject to a \$250 fine and towing. Vehicle owners may find their relocated cars by calling (202) 541-6078.

Thanks to all of our District employees who worked so hard to clear the snow and salt our streets. We appreciate your efforts!



## AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

[Advisory Neighborhood Commissions](#)

# Community Profile

## Doran Flowers

In November 1997, during his final year of law school in Washington, Mt. Pleasant resident Doran Flowers read a newspaper item that labeled District schools in a state of crisis. Together with a group of friends, Doran decided to take action to help the schools.

The all-volunteer group of friends named the group "Turning the Page" (TTP). Doran and his friends spent hundreds of hours volunteering at local schools and listening to community leaders. Turning the Page volunteers decided their focus would be to increase family involvement and community investment in the District's most economically disadvantaged schools.

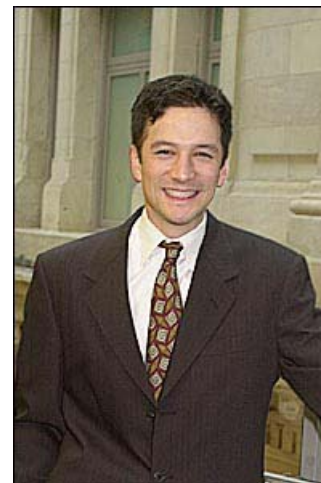
As the centerpiece of their long-term commitment to improving DC public school children's academic achievement, TTP volunteers organized and implemented a school-based, parent involvement initiative entitled, "Community Nights at the Library." Community Nights activities include parent workshops, family mentoring, book distributions, family resource packages, and even dinner.

In July 2000, TTP moved from an all-volunteer group to its first full-time president. Doran is still an integral part of the organization, and he continues to volunteer each week on organizational and sustainability issues. Doran also reads with students at Randle Highlands Elementary School, one of TTP's partner schools.

Doran is the December adult winner of the Mayor's Community Service Award, which is sponsored by the DC Commission on National and Community Service. Thanks, Doran, for thinking of a way to really help your community!

If you would like to nominate a youth or an adult for the monthly award, visit [www.cnscs.dc.gov](http://www.cnscs.dc.gov) for nomination information or call (202) 727-9461.

For more information about Turning the Page, visit [www.turningthepage.org](http://www.turningthepage.org).



Doran Flowers

## 2002 Health Care Forum

On December 9, our city held a Health Care Forum at the headquarters of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. At the summit of city officials and health care providers, participants gathered to discuss issues that face all of us. It was a productive session, leading to increased dialogue about the state of health care in our city.

Eighteen months ago, the District government took a bold and controversial step to improve the health care of its most vulnerable citizens. We did so in the face of considerable resistance and skepticism. After a year and a half of operation, I can say without equivocation that we have taken a major step forward in improving the quality of health care provided by the District government and that we have greatly improved access to that health care.



However, we did not take this step alone. The DC Healthcare Alliance is a strong and vibrant network of private hospitals, clinics, and individual providers working under the supervision and oversight of the DC Department of Health. Working together with the private sector, we have achieved what many said could not be done. We have enrolled 28,000 District residents in the program to date. The Alliance is handling over 10,000 patient visits each month, delivering specialty care, primary care, dental, prenatal, urgent, and inpatient care. We have filled roughly 200,000 prescriptions and handled over 15,000 emergency room visits.

We have helped assess patients who are eligible for federal Medicare or Medicaid coverage, and we have established clear criteria for residency to determine eligibility in the program. The provider network—hospitals, clinics, and individual practitioners—continues to expand, and our enrollment initiatives are clearly working.

In a very short period, we have made a difference in the lives of thousands of residents—residents who, for the most part, had given up on the possibility of obtaining health coverage. We have achieved real success in solving a problem that still plagues us as a nation—the problem of access to health coverage for the uninsured, the unemployed, and the working poor.

We have replaced a chronically mismanaged health care program for the indigent that was based on emergency care, with a comprehensive health care program with an emphasis on preventative care and family medicine. We have improved access to all residents by having provider partners across the District and in all of our neighborhoods. As we go forward, we have challenges in front of us; but I am confident that we can work together and continue to improve the quality of the city's health care system.



LINK TO OTHER  
WEBSITES

[DC Agenda](#)

[Hands on DC](#)

[DC Convention  
and Tourism](#)

[DC Public Library](#)

## District Public Radio System to Improve

Two weeks ago, City Administrator John Koskinen announced a new contract for the District of Columbia's public safety radio system. The District negotiated a \$17 million contract with Illinois-based Motorola, Inc. for the principal components of a new radio system.

The radio system upgrade will correct serious deficiencies in the present system, providing our city with the most complete coverage possible. The new system will expand radio coverage to many new areas of the city, including hard to reach places such as Metrorail. In addition, it's very important to note that the upgrade will allow District public safety personnel to communicate with neighboring jurisdictions.

The new wireless communications system—to be developed in the coming months—will be a huge step forward in addressing critical issues of public safety. We need to ensure that our Fire/EMS workers can communicate quickly and efficiently with each other and their counterparts in the region, as well as with hospitals. The technology that will improve our 800-megahertz system is necessary to ensure that we have constant, seamless contact at the scene of fires and other emergencies. In addition, the new system will help improve communication between police and fire responders—an important part of public safety that should not be overlooked.

Since September 11, 2001, our city has made great strides in protecting the needs of citizens during times of crisis. We've also realized the importance of regional partnerships—including constant communication with our neighbors in Maryland and Virginia. With increased communications among neighboring cities and states, we can help prevent and respond to emergencies.

This upgraded radio system will help provide increased security for District residents, while keeping our first-responders up to speed with the best technology possible. We expect the system, which is proceeding on schedule and within budget, to be fully implemented by September 30, 2003.

## H&M Department Stores are Coming to the District

A little piece of Sweden is coming to the District of Columbia. On December 9, I announced that H&M Stores plans to open two locations in the District.

H&M was established in Västerås, Sweden in 1947 by Erling Persson. The chain of stores sells clothes and cosmetics in over 809 locations in 14 countries around the world. H&M, whose motto is "Fashion and Quality at the Best Prices," plans to open 90 new stores around the world this year.

The imminent arrival of H&M stores at Metro Center (in the old Woodward & Lothrop building) and in the Shops at Georgetown Park is a sign that our downtown is in full swing. Consider a few examples of how conditions are improving downtown:

- Housing starts are up, with 3,076 new units of housing under construction downtown.
- The new Convention Center is just a few months away from opening.
- Fifty percent of the net new jobs in the city are downtown.

By this time next year, more jobs will be created, and holiday shoppers will have a new retail destination to visit. H&M selected the "Woodies" building, owned by developer Doug Jemal, to be its regional flagship store. In total, the department store chain plans to bring five stores to our region. The Metro Center store will be the largest (37,000 square feet) and will contain a full line of clothing and accessories for men, women, teens, and children, as well as a maternity line.

The Metro Center store is scheduled to open in August 2003, and the store in Georgetown Park is slated to open in February 2003. The DC Department of Employment Services has already started working closely with H&M to recruit and train people for the 500-plus regional jobs that will be created. In the District of Columbia alone, there will be 100 jobs available—70 at the downtown store and 30 at the Georgetown store.

There is much to be excited about in the near future! We'll see residents working in jobs in the District, and we'll see people shopping in our city for what they want and need.





## Mayor's Arts Awards Recognize Artists and Organizations

The Washington, DC arts community gathered at the Lincoln Theater on December 9 to celebrate the city's finest visual, creative, and performing artists. I presided at the gala ceremony, which was hosted by WRC-TV anchor Jim Vance.

Winners of the 18th Annual Mayor's Arts Awards are:

- Innovation in the Arts: Art-O-Matic
- Excellence in an Artistic Discipline: Arena Stage; Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra
- Outstanding Emerging Artist: Spoken Resistance; Yolanda Young
- Outstanding Contributions to Arts Education: Rincones and Co. Dance Theatre; The Patricia M. Sitar Center for the Arts
- Excellence in Service to the Arts: WAMU-FM; Joy of Motion Dance Center

In addition, legendary Blues musician Nap Turner and Hecht's Department Stores CEO Frank J. Guzzetta were recognized for their valuable contributions to Washington's cultural life.

Since 1968, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, which sponsors the event, has ensured that the arts flourish in Washington, DC.

I believe strongly that the arts must be a part of any great city. Artists are among our most valued and highly respected citizens. They help celebrate our diversity, and they help us realize the value in self-expression. In addition, a thriving arts community is critical to our economy. I believe we can always do more to recognize the great local artists of Washington.

## District Activities



Mayor Williams signs autographs during a December 11 visit to the MCI Center for the Washington Wizards Holiday Party for Kids.



The men and women of the DC Gospel Choir sang for the opening of the Mayor's 18th Annual Arts Awards at the Lincoln Theater.



Mayor Williams poses with holiday characters and hospitality workers at the former Woodward & Lothrop building where the windows are decorated for the season.



Rain, sleet, or snow, Officer Fred Watkins was on the job outside the John A. Wilson. A late fall storm blanketed the area on December 5, leaving as much as 7 inches on the ground.

## Community News

- Mayor Williams Hosts Grand Lighting Ceremony at District Building
- Mayor Announces New Venture Capital Firm to Spur Small Business Growth
- DC Council Confirms Veterans Affairs Director

*Click [here](#)* to view news releases.

